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cont

a second oxide selected from the group consisting of silicon dioxide and aluminum oxide, wherein the second oxide is present in the layer in a mole fraction of up to about 0.55 based on the total moles of niobium oxide and the second oxide in the layer.

8 23. (New) A thin film optical coating for use on a substrate, having a layer comprising a sol-gel derived oxide system, the sol-gel derived oxide system comprising niobium oxide, silicon dioxide and aluminum oxide, wherein the layer is capable of providing an index of refraction of from about 1.60 to about 1.90 and the niobium oxide is present in the layer in a mole fraction of from about 0.22 to about 0.53, the silicon dioxide is present in the layer in a mole fraction of from about 0.29 to about 0.49, and the aluminum oxide is present in the layer in a mole fraction of from about 0.17 to about 0.29, each mole fraction being based on the total moles of niobium oxide, silicon dioxide and aluminum oxide in the layer.

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 11-12, 19-20 and 22-23 are currently pending in the application.

Applicants have enclosed a check in the amount of \$42 to cover the addition of one independent claim in the present application. By the present amendment, applicants have added two independent claims, bringing the total number of independent claims in the application to five, one more than originally paid for.

The Examiner has objected to claims 3, 20 and 21 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicants would like to point out that claim 20 is already in independent form having been rewritten in such manner in applicants' prior response to the Office Action dated August 2, 2000 (Paper No. 5). By the present amendment, claims 3 and 21 have been canceled without prejudice.